

Physician Assistant

Physician assistants (PAs) are health professionals who deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services. PAs are licensed to practice under the supervision of a physician (M.D. or D.O.) and state law determines the scope of their practice. In general, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, make diagnoses, prescribe medications, administer treatments (including suturing, casting, and minor surgery), assist in surgery, and counsel and educate patients (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006).

PAs are educated in the medical school model to complement physician training. In some schools they attend some of the same classes as medical students. All PA programs emphasize primary care (i.e., emergency medicine, family practice, pediatrics, internal medicine, and obstetrics/gynecology). More than 50% of practicing PAs work in one of these fields; however, PAs practice in over 60 specialty areas nationally. PAs can pursue postgraduate training in areas such as, gynecology, occupational medicine, pediatrics, and surgery.

Working as a PA



Job opportunities for PAs are good, especially in rural and inner city clinics. Physicians and institutions are expected to employ more PAs to provide primary care and to assist with medical and surgical procedures because PAs are cost-effective and productive members of the healthcare team. Besides the traditional office-based setting, PAs should find a growing number of jobs in institutional settings such as hospitals, academic medical centers, public clinics, and prisons. According to the American Academy of Physician Assistants, median income for PAs in full-time clinical practice in 2006 was about \$74,980. Income varies by specialty, practice setting, geographical location, and years of experience.

Additional Information

Jim Zakely

Health Professions Advisor
TILT
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1052
(970) 491-7095
Jim.Zakely@colostate.edu

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center CHA/PA Program

Fitzsimons, Building 500, Room E-7019
P. O. Box 6508
13001 East 17th Place, 7th Floor
Aurora, CO 80045-0508
chapa_info@uchsc.edu
www.uchsc.edu/chapa

Red Rocks Community College

13300 West Sixth Ave
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1255
(303) 914-6600
www.rrcc.ccco.es.edu/pa/index.htm

American Academy of Physician Assistants

950 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1522
(703) 836-2272
www.aapa.org

Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

www.gre.org

CSU Premedica Club

www.casa.colostate.edu/advising/preprof/med/
club.cfm

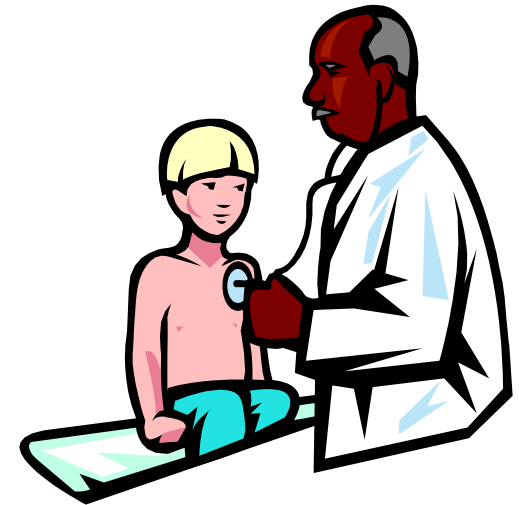
Human Health Pre-Professional Programs

www.casa.colostate.edu/advising/preprof/index.cfm



Center for Advising and Student Achievement

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT



Health Track Advising

Professional Programs

As of 2007 there were 136 accredited or provisionally accredited educational programs for physician assistants (PAs); 68 of these programs offer a master's degree. The remainder offer either a bachelor's degree or an associate degree. Most PA graduates have at least a bachelor's degree.

Programs are at least 2 years of classroom and laboratory work followed by clinical rotations in the various medical disciplines (e.g. family practice, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, etc.). Upon completion of a PA program, students may receive a certificate, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree or a master's degree.

For more information about specific physician assistant schools contact: www.aapa.org/pgmlist.php3

Last updated 5/09—Information is subject to change.

Admissions Requirements

Admissions requirements are GENERAL and may differ from school to school. Please contact the individual schools to discuss specific admissions requirements.

- Bachelor's degree (for most programs)
- Competitive cumulative GPA
- Competitive Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score
- Application submitted to each school — some schools use the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA)
- Strong interest in patient care and health care experience
- Letters of recommendation
- Interview

Typical Academic Prerequisites

General Biology	(2 semesters with labs)
General Chemistry	(2 semesters with labs)
Genetics	(1 semester)
Human Anatomy	(1 semester)
Physiology	(1 semester)
Upper Division Science	(2 semesters)
Psychology	(2 semesters)
Humanities	(4 semesters)
Statistics	(1 semester)

Highly recommended courses:

Recommended CSU Courses

LIFE 102 and LIFE 103
CHEM 111/112 and CHEM 113/114
BZ 350, SOCR 330
BMS 301 (check with school)
BMS 360 (BZ 110 OR LIFE 102 AND CHEM 245 OR CHEM 345 are prerequisites) OR BMS 300
300/400 level science courses (contact school)
PSY 100, PSY 260, PSY 320, PSY 465 (any PSY course, not HDF5 or SOC)
Courses from prefixes AR, D, E, MU, PHIL, SPCM, TH, Language— (freshman composition is not acceptable at UCHSC)
EHR5 307, STAT 301, or STAT 307
BC 351, LIFE 205/206 or MIP 300
OT 215, ANTH, CO, Spanish